



IN REMEMBRANCE

SUBJECTS: Social Studies and Language Arts

GRADES: 4-5

KERA GOALS: Meets KERA goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS: Use reference tools and research tools; make sense of the variety of materials they read; make sense of the various things they observe; write using appropriate forms for different audiences and purposes; make sense of and communicate ideas with the visual arts; observe, analyze, and interpret human behaviors, social groupings, and institutions; interact and work with many ethnic and cultural groups; recognize, apply, and understand the relationship between people and geography; understand, analyze, and interpret historical events; create works of art and make presentations; analyze their own and other's artistic products; show that they understand how time, place, and society influence the arts and humanities; show their abilities to become self-sufficient individuals; show their abilities to become responsible members of a family, work group, or community; use critical thinking skills to solve a variety of problems in a real-life situation; use creative thinking skills to develop ideas or products; use a decision making process to make an informed decision; connect knowledge and experiences from different subject areas; use what they already know to acquire new knowledge, skills, or interpret experiences; and expand their understanding of existing knowledge.

DURATION: One class period of 25-35 minutes

GROUP SIZE: One classroom of 25-35 students (or less)

SETTING: Indoors or outside with clipboards

KEY VOCABULARY: Tombstone, Stephen Bishop, Union soldier, epitaph, symbol

ANTICIPATORY SET: Today we are going to talk about a very special cave guide. Has anyone heard of Stephen Bishop?

OBJECTIVES: The students will be able to: 1) work independently to create a symbol that best describes Stephen Bishop; 2) produce a creative writing project in the form of a letter.

MATERIALS:

- ◆ Black and white photos or an overhead transparency of Stephen Bishop's tombstone
- ◆ fifth grade report
- ◆ activity sheets
- ◆ clipboards
- ◆ pencil
- ◆ crayons



BACKGROUND: Stephen Bishop was a famous cave guide from 1838 to 1857. His popularity even spread overseas. People would travel for hundreds of miles to see Mammoth Cave. When visitors arrived they would often request Stephen to be their guide. Stephen was well known for exploring over 20 miles of cave passages, being the first to cross the Bottomless Pit and also the first to see the Echo River and its eyeless cavefish. Stephen Bishop was a slave who worked in Mammoth Cave at the same time that Dr. John Croghan, of Louisville, owned the Mammoth Cave Estate.

When Stephen Bishop died in 1857, his wife Charlotte had very little money. He was buried in what is now called "The Old Guides' Cemetery." It is said that Stephen was buried there to keep a watch on the entrance of the cave. More than 20 years after Stephen's death, a visitor from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, arranged for a tombstone to be placed on his grave. The stone was purchased by Mr. Mellon, a well known steel industrialist in the mid- to late 1800's. The stone he purchased was an old Union soldier's headstone. The soldier's name was sanded off and replaced with, "Stephen Bishop, First Guide & Explorer of the Mammoth Cave, Died June 15, 1859 in his 37th year." Stephen was 37 years old but he died sometime in the summer of 1857. The exact date of his death is not known. The symbol at the top of Stephen's grave is the symbol placed on a Union soldier's stone. Stephen was not a soldier during the civil war.

Epitaphs and symbols are often placed on graves to help remember a person. These symbols are selected because they represent what was important to or about that person. Some symbols are commonly used by specific religions, some are used for certain ages, and others are unique for that individual.

PROCEDURE:

1. The teacher gives copies of a report written by a 5th grader about Stephen Bishop. The teacher may wish to have students take turns reading the report aloud, a paragraph at a time.
2. The teacher reviews, with the students, who Stephen Bishop was and how he explored Mammoth Cave. The teacher will want to be sure the students know that Stephen Bishop guided people through the cave.
3. The students will study the black and white photo of Stephen Bishop's tombstone.
4. After the photos are studied the class discusses the symbols they find on the stone. The teacher may wish to ask questions such as, "Would Stephen like the fact that he has a Union flag on his stone? Since Stephen was a famous cave guide what symbol might he have chosen? What symbol did you think Stephen's family might have selected?"
5. The students then look at the words on the stone. The class discusses the epitaph. The teacher may ask questions such as, "How do you think Stephen would feel being called the first guide and explorer?" Note: Stephen was one of the first guides, but many people explored the cave before him. Stephen knew prehistoric people had visited many miles of the cave long before he did.
6. After discussing Stephen's tombstone the students will work on their individual activity sheets. The teacher asks the students to draw a symbol that tells something about Stephen Bishop.
7. The students may choose to share their symbols.
8. The students then complete their writing. The students pretend they are a visitor that just came out of the cave with Stephen Bishop. They are asked to write a letter to a family member or friend about what they have seen and their impressions of Stephen Bishop.
9. The teacher collects the student's work.

CLOSURE: We have studied about a special person today. Families select epitaphs and symbols to represent what was unique about a person.

EVALUATION: The teacher is able to evaluate the students during class discussion and their writings.

EXTENSIONS:

1. The class could visit a cemetery and draw symbols and collect epitaphs. After returning to the classroom, students could compare what they gathered and make conclusions about the various stones.
2. The students could make a family tree. Discuss with their families some of the special memories they or their parents have about older family members and make a family symbol.
3. The students could collect newspaper articles about other famous people and see how they are remembered.



STEPHEN BISHOP.
FIRST GUIDE & EXPLORER
OF THE
MAMMOTH CAVE.
DIED JUNE 15, 1859.
IN HIS 37 YEAR.

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Stephen Bishop, Cave Explorer

Written by: Jessica Howell, February 2000, 5th grade, Hiseville Elementary School

Mammoth Cave, in Kentucky, is the longest cave in the world. Much of what is known about this great cave is because of Stephen Bishop's exploration.

When he was only 17 years old his master, Mr. Frank Gorin, sent him to Mammoth Cave to be a guide. Mr. Gorin owned the cave and wanted to make money from the tourists. Even though Stephen was sent to the cave on orders he became very fond of the cave.

When Stephen wasn't giving a tour he loved to explore farther into the wild of all of the wildest caves. He was very strong, athletic and brave. This all helped him to be one of the greatest cave explorers in the U.S. and in Mammoth Cave's history.

The first summer he was at Mammoth Cave Stephen squeezed through some narrow passages and came to a deep pit that looked bottomless. This created more interest for him to explore more of Mammoth Cave. Some tourists wanted Stephen to take them into the wildest parts of the cave and he did take them farther into the cave where he had been. Then he took different routes to find other passageways.

One of these visitors was H. C. Stevenson. When the tourists reached the Bottomless Pit they used cedar pole ladders to span the 6 foot mouth of the pit. Just beyond that they jumped a large crack and discovered even more of the cave. As the tourists explored the cave it became more and more different, the floors were damp. Much to their surprise they found an underground river! Stephen and the tourists named it River Styx. The River is now called Echo River, but some of us who are fond of Stephen call it the River Styx.

In later explorations Stephen found new routes from the river shores and discovered other parts of the cave like Mammoth Dome and the Snowball Room. I think it was his dream to discover all of Mammoth Cave before he died.

When wading in the river Stephen discovered the eyeless fish. A permanent cedar bridge was built across the Bottomless Pit and tourism exploded. In 1839 Dr. John Croghan, a doctor from Louisville, Kentucky, bought Mammoth Cave and the famous Stephen Bishop. Dr. Croghan opened a hospital in Mammoth Cave to treat tuberculosis. The doctor thought living in the cave would cure this disease, but the patients died.

In 1842 Stephen was sent to Dr. Croghan's estate in Louisville and he worked for two weeks drawing a map of Mammoth Cave completely from memory. His map showed amazing accuracy. The map was published in 1844 in Bullit's Rambles in Mammoth Cave. Stephen was given full credit for his work which was unusual for a black slave. Stephen did get the map done but he left off some of the Mammoth Cave because he died before he could explore more.

Stephen's tour outfit was a chocolate colored slouch hat, a green jacket, and striped pants. He gave tours that people really enjoyed because of his great wit, charm and knowledge. He was also a hero because he saved a couple of men by carrying them out of the cave. He would take tourists to special parts of the cave if they would teach him something new and learned to write by watching them write their names on the cave walls. Stephen learned four languages and could talk about all kinds of topics. The reason he did this was because slaves weren't supposed to learn to read or write and that is why his master didn't teach him.

Stephen gained his freedom in 1856. His master, Dr. Croghan, died in 1849 and his will said that Stephen could be

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freed in 7 years. Stephen planned to return to Liberia, Africa with his wife and son. Stephen wanted to start a new life. He never got to do this because he died that next year in 1857 of some people say a lung disease. Stephen put Mammoth Cave on the map and is called "the Columbus of the underground world."

Stephen was a self-educated man. He had a fine genius, a great fund of wit and humor. With some little knowledge of Latin and Greek, and much knowledge of geology, his greatest talent was his knowledge of man. One of his owners said that Stephen had "talents of the first order. He was trustworthy and reliable and was a hero."

Mammoth Cave's First Guide

The remarkable "Stephen", the first Charon of Kentucky's underworld, was a slave. Stephen is graphically described by Nathaniel P. Willis, one of the men who had the good fortune to view the cave under the protection of the first guide, Stephen Bishop. In describing Stephen the author says

"he is very picturesque...part mulatto and part Indian. With more of the physiognomy of a Spaniard, with masses of black hair, curling slightly and gracefully, and his long mustache, giving quite an appearance. He is of middle size, but built for an athlete. With broad chest and shoulders, narrow hips and legs slightly bowed. Mammoth Cave is a wonder in which draws good society and Stephen shows that he is used to it.

Stephen's intelligent face is assured and tranquil, and his manners are particularly quiet. Stephen talks to charming ladies with the air of a man who is accustomed to their good will and attentive listening.

Stephen is married, he has one boy, takes a newspaper, studies geology, and means to go to Liberia as soon as he can buy his wife, child and self from his present master."

Stephen was married to Charlotte. (We do not know her last name but most of the slaves took the last names of their owner.) In the cave on a wall is written "Stephen and Charlotte forever."

Stephen Bishop Dies

In the 19 years that young Stephen spent at Mammoth Cave, he has always been a tour guide. Stephen died young, and today he sleeps quietly in a woodland spot. Beneath drooping forest trees, almost within sight of the entrance to the cave. Stephen is buried in the "Old Guide's Cemetery", on the hill south of the cave.

Thank you Stephen!

Sources

Derouchie, Mayo Hanley; Webb, Donna R. Stephen Bishop: Guide Explorer, Slave

Meloy, Harold, The Stephen Bishop Story, A Man and the Legend. 1974 Harold Maloy

